

Salem Public Schools  
Salem School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 27, 2020

On April 27, 2020 the Salem School Committee held their regular meeting beginning at 7:00 pm. This was a zoom meeting.

**In Attendance:** Mayor Kimberly Driscoll, Mary Manning, Amanda Campbell, Ana Nuncio, Kristin Pangallo, James Fleming, Manny Cruz, Jillian Flynn

**Others in Attendance:** Kathleen Smith, Kate Carbone, Kristin Shaver, Jill Conrad, Deborah Connerty, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Ruben Carmona, Jose Munoz, Leanne Smith, Amy Richardson, Emily Ullman, Rebecca Westlake

**Call to Order**

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**Consent Agenda:**

At this time Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Consent Agenda and Ms. Manning seconded. The motion carried by roll-call:

Ms. Manning:	Yes
Mr. Fleming:	Yes
Ms. Pangallo:	Yes
Ms. Nuncio:	Yes
Ms. Campbell:	Yes
Mayor Driscoll:	Yes

**Agenda**

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Agenda. Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the Agenda and Ms. Manning seconded. The motion carried by roll-call:

Ms. Manning:	Yes
Mr. Fleming;	Yes
Ms. Pangallo:	Yes
Ms. Nuncio:	Yes
Ms. Campbell:	Yes
Mayor Driscoll:	Yes

### **Student School Committee Representative Report – Jillian Flynn**

Jillian Flynn gave an update on her meeting with the Mayor. She informed the Committee she worked with the Police Chief and offered the assistance of the Student Advisory Council. The Chief suggested book donations for those who will be staying at the field house. Ms. Flynn also informed the Chief the Council has been working to improve the men's bathrooms. Ms. Flynn went on to explain that she spoke with some Seniors regarding the school closure. She informed the Committee although some Seniors are disappointed they understand safety is more important. The SAC is working on ideas to celebrate the seniors. She had a meeting with the Superintendent which was helpful as well. Miss Flynn went on to talk about their work on the SAC vision and mission statement. At this time, they are still working on this. She explained that they are working with Boston Public Schools to solidify this. Finally, she invited the Committee to attend any of their SAC meetings.

### **Superintendent Report**

Superintendent Smith addressed the Committee. She discussed her meeting with Miss Flynn and expressed her appreciation for the SAC and is excited to meet with the SAC on Wednesday. She told the Committee that they are working on ways to celebrate the seniors and will make sure everyone is aware. The Superintendent went on to discuss the school closing. She discussed the school calendar with mention of the April vacation as time for teachers and parents to take a break. She went discussed last days of school. The Bentley School is June 29, the Carlton is June 22, the Saltonstall is June 30, the Early Childhood Center is out on June 24 and all other schools are out on June 24<sup>th</sup>. She also talked about next years' calendar and that September 14 will need to be a day off because of the marathon. She went on to discuss some issues now that we are closed. One of the issues is that people have left items in lockers and we will need to allow time to have those items retrieved. She has been transitioning with Dr. Zrike. She discussed upcoming Senior activities. She will ask Dr. Meier to address the Committee to discuss what we are doing for Seniors at the end of the year. At this time, she asked Dr. Conrad to address the Committee regarding Kindergarten registration. Dr. Conrad assured that everyone would receive their assignments by the end of the week. She also informed the Committee they are able to accept applications. She asked that people reach out and apply by contacting the Parent Information Center. Superintendent Smith thanked Dr. Conrad for her continued work.

Superintendent Smith announced Samantha Meier as the new principal at the high school. She also announced the Bates School Principal as Gavin Softic. She reminded them about Elizabeth Rogers as the new principal at the Bentley School. She is encouraging them to schedule a time to meet with the community utilizing Zoom. She reminded everyone this now leaves three openings for the Assistant Principal. She also mentioned an opening at the high school for an assistant principal. Superintendent Smith then went on to discuss the budget. She has been working closely with the Mayor and the Mayor will update on this. She has been working with Dr. Zrike on the FY21 budget. She informed the Committee of some challenges due to the Pandemic. She would like to have a presentation on May 18 and a hearing the week of May 25. She briefly discussed the teachers' negotiations and the presentation they gave. She discussed their hard work on this and for what the students deserve.

Finally, she expressed how proud she is of the district for pulling together and putting in countless hours to provide a remote learning platform. She explained the challenges and the successes. They have distributed chromebooks, they have developed instruction for those students who need special instruction. She explained how grateful she is to the School Committee for giving us parent feedback and helping us to provide the best instruction.

The Mayor asked for questions and Ms. Manning asked about future Finance Committee meetings. The Superintendent explained that we will get something together hopefully this week. The Mayor explained the issues with putting together the FY21 budget. She discussed the lack of revenues due to the Pandemic. She explained that 50% is from the property taxes, 25% is from the state, and 25% from fees and businesses. She explained there are some holes in the revenues so we are working to maintain what we currently have and will hopefully have more information as we get closer to the end of this year. Her hope is to maintain what we have. Ms. Manning agreed this is understandable. Mr. Fleming asked about grading for the third and fourth quarters. The Superintendent explained they are addressing this by using a credit no credit system by the end of March. All others they are working on a way to send out report cards through the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Carbone explained this is for k-5 and further discussions will be going on next Monday. Mr. Fleming asked about the rankings for high school students. Miss. Flynn explained that rankings were done on second quarter.

At this time, the Mayor turned the meeting over to Kate Carbone for the remote learning presentation. Ms. Carbone introduced the K-5 Learning Plan. She explained this is an ongoing work in progress. She explained that the past six weeks have been challenging. She explained the district understands the additional responsibilities put on the parents.

Ms. Carbone went introduced the principals, Ruben Carbona, Principal of the Horace Mann Lab School, J.J. Munoz is the Principal of the Bates Elementary School, Leanne Smith is the Principal of Witchcraft Elementary School, Amy Richardson is the District Director of Curriculum and Instruction for grades K-8, Rebecca Westlake is the Director of ELL, and Emily Ullman is the Director of Community Engagement and Partnership.

The presentation consisted of information on guidance for principals, parent outreach, guidance for the on-line learning platforms, and information for the education plan. Ms. Carbone explained the expectation of committing half of a normal day to learning which is about 2.5 to 3 hours a day. The focus is enriching what has already been learned with a variety of learning tools. These tools include on-line and off-line work. There is time allowed for enrichment with art, music, and physical education. Students will also have access to their teachers at least two to three times a week. Ms. Carbone also informed the Committee that the state of Massachusetts is second in the country with exceptional learning tools. Ms. Carbone also shared a typical student schedule for parents.

At this time, each principal and director presented material on the learning platform. Instructions were given to parents on how to access this information on the salemlearns

website. The administrators gave detailed information on how google classroom works. There was a presentation with the use of youtube and examples of teachers' work. The group presented learning materials for grades K-5. These learning materials are available both on-line and in paper copy. The materials are available in multiple languages as well. Additionally, work has been done to reach out to parents to determine internet access. Approximately 250 families were without access. However, the district was able to work with Comcast to provide low-cost internet for two months and the district is paying for the additional four months through the use of a donation from the Salem Children's Family.

The presentation included information for students who are in the special education programs. Ms. Connerty presented a student schedule for parents. She explained how services are being delivered through the use of on-line meeting platforms, and telephonic uses. She explained the staff is working with families to not inundate them with scheduling services. Examples of this are students with physical therapies, occupational therapies, and speech services.

Finally, Kate Carbone explained that going forward the district will have to incorporate new learning materials. Additionally, work needs to be done to streamline the amount of passwords parents need to use to access the variety of platforms. She also discussed the use of feedback to parents and tracking this feedback. One of the issues that the district will be working on is assessing student gaps. Finally, she explained how excited everyone is to get back to normal and working with their students.

The Mayor thanked the team for their hard work. She understands how difficult this has been for our educators and she was extremely thankful their work. The Mayor asked about a portal for families to offer feedback. Specifically, who do parents contact regarding feedback. Ms. Carbone suggested starting with the teachers for issues. Ms. Connerty suggested parents reach out as soon as issues arise and not to sit on issues. The Mayor suggested maybe a rollcall system to answer questions about feedback.

The Mayor asked the Committee if they had questions. Dr. Pangallo inquired about how much of the work needs to be completed or should there be focus on particular work. Ms. Carbone explained that the work they do should be driven by what the teacher recommends to complete. She explained that kids can make choices along with working with their teachers. Dr. Pangallo also asked about advice on how to motivate kids to do the work with they are refusing. Ms. Carbone expressed that the district doesn't want kids struggling. She recommends getting the kids outside and offer breaks when this happens. Additional recommendations include reaching out to the teacher to streamline the work. Mr. Fleming asked about attendance and what the percent of participation is for the prek-5 subgroup. Ms. Carbone explained that we are tracking which students are present and which are not. They are not doing this as a consequence but rather to reach out to those not attending to offer assistance. The principals explained they are tracking it differently from school to school. However, they do work together to identify students who are not in attendance to reach out to families. Ms. Manning expressed her appreciation for students who are now getting access to the internet. She had concerns about kids who have not had access prior to now. She worries

that they will need additional supports to navigate the learning platform. She also went on to express how impressed with the work that has been done. Ms. Carbone thanked Ms. Manning and informed her she knows additional supports will be needed. They did develop guidance sheets and a hotline to assist these families. Dr. Pangallo asked about parents who haven't seen the rollout that we were able to see tonight. How will these parents have access to this plan and when will the students experience this roll out? Ms. Carbone explained their goal is to communicate the vision to staff and hope to have this available to parents by the beginning of next week. Dr. Pangallo went on to ask about the zoom meetings and students who can't attend small group meetings. Ms. Carbone explained those students will need to schedule a make-up type session or a reconnect. The team also explained they have recorded office hours and live office hours.

The Mayor asked for additional questions and none were asked. She referred to the Superintendent for additional information and there was none at this time. However, the Superintendent explained her understanding for those who are struggling with using computer technologies.

**Action Item Old Business:**

None

**Action Items New Business**

None

**Finance Reports**

None

**Subcommittee Reports**

None

**Public Comments**

The Mayor asked Dr. Conrad to discuss the comments. Dr. Conrad discussed a comment from Melissa White. The comment was regarding on-line learning and will students be kept back a year?

Susan Lowe asked about students K-5 should have tasks to complete each day.

Jennifer Novicki a parent of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader and a 5<sup>th</sup> grader of outplaced student. She commended the teachers for doing an incredible job. She suggested that students be given creative activities. She would like more project-based learning versus using worksheet after worksheet.

Stacy Kibb asked about classes for next year.

The Mayor requested the School Department to follow-up on these questions. She noted that the next meeting will focus on upper grades.

### **School Committee Concerns and Resolutions**

Mr. Fleming asked about having a review from the finance director regarding the expenditures and the budget to date at the next meeting.

The Mayor added that they are still receiving reports that people are using playscapes at schools and would like Ryan to put up caution tape specifically at the Bates School and Saltonstall. Another comment is having suggestions for senior activities that are safe for students.

The Mayor announced Mr. Cruz arrived slightly late.

At this time the Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded.

Mary Manning:	Yes
James Fleming:	Yes
Kristin Pangallo:	Yes
Ana Nuncio:	Yes
Manny Cruz:	Yes
Amanda Campbell:	Yes
Kimberely Driscoll:	Yes

### **Adjournment**

The Meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Jennifer A Gariepy*

Executive Assistant to the School Committee  
& the Superintendent